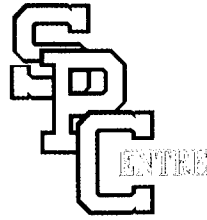


History of Spencer-Penn



In the fall of 1927, Spencer-Penn School opened its doors to begin a history of high expectations for education and discipline. Coming from families of farmers and factory workers, these students were challenged to achieve, not only by their teachers but also by their parents who wanted more for their children. This tradition continued through Spencer-Penn's seventy-six years as a public school.

Spencer-Penn School not only became the hub of education in this very rural southwestern section of Henry County, but it also became the heart of community events. This site was the place for friends to gather for the Spencer Fair, family reunions, meetings, athletic events, and performances.

When the school closed as a public school in June 2004, the Spencer-Penn School Preservation Organization was formed to study the feasibility of purchasing the school and to assess how the community would use it if it were obtained. The group reflected on the school's history and found the path already set: the property would be a site for education and special events.

Spencer-Penn Centre has endless potential as an education and special events centre. Located halfway between Martinsville and Stuart and near the North Carolina state line, it serves a large population that would otherwise have to travel greater distances to take advantage of a class or to host an event. Rates for classes and rental space are affordable for

the population and are open to anyone. Structurally, the Centre has large classrooms and a spacious gymnasium/multipurpose room that are conducive to classes and special events and can host small to large groups of people. Since the building was a former school, it has ample updated restrooms, good lighting and, of course, passes all safety codes.

Renovation, which has dealt mainly with updating the building rather than structural changes, has upheld the integrity of the historic school. However, handicap adaptations have been made. The restrooms are now handicap accessible and ramps have been built in the 1962 foyer and on the exterior 1948 wing. Memorabilia and pictures of the school and former students embellish each room.

Renovation of the 1948 and 1962 wings are completed. Classrooms have been used for birthday parties, family reunions, showers, sit-down dinners for as many as thirty people, and classes ranging from line dancing to scrap booking. The gymnasium/multipurpose room has been renamed *Alumni Hall*. It can seat 200 for dinner and has been used for weddings and wedding receptions, concerts, parties, business dinners, family and class reunions, and classes such as aerobics and ballroom dancing. *The George Burton Conference Room* is available for club and business meetings or training sessions. In March 2007, fast speed internet was installed so that computer classes could